

[Review] Colin Higgins (2015) Cataloging and managing film and video collections: a guide to using RDA and MARC21

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Book review

Colin Higgins. *Cataloging & managing film and video collections: a guide to using RDA and MARC 21* Chicago: American Library Association, 2015.

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The MARC 21 Bibliographic Standard has advice on how to catalogue as does RDA and in this book Higgins provides relevant information from both, sometimes highlighting areas where they agree, disagree or are ambiguous and providing his own recommendation for best practice. For new cataloguers this could be an excellent way to begin learning to navigate your way through the standards as many of the explanations can be extended to books and other items besides film. There is also a complete chapter on how to use AACR2 for film, which acknowledges the fact that many institutions will be copy cataloguing without necessarily updating every record to RDA.

The book is organised so that over several chapters it runs through the fields of the MARC record one by one, explaining how to best construct them. This will be a logical and helpful arrangement for those who wish to use the book as a reference tool as it mirrors the approach we might use to build or update our own records. This type of organisation also turned out to be a reminder of some of the issues with MARC in general as it highlighted some of the areas where information is duplicated (in particular when we reached the 546 Language Note field we were directed back to the section on the 041 field). It was interesting to see how, although MARC records some things like language in multiple places, there are other data items pertinent to film such as aspect ratio that have no home at all there and hence have to end up in a 500 note.

There were many interesting facts to be learnt. I learned that 57 years pass between the storylines of *Alien* and *Aliens*, that *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* has 743 people in the credits, I learnt the difference between a remake and a reboot and the physical differences between a CD and a DVD. Besides these, Higgins provides us with many great tips and insights to remember when we are cataloguing, for example he recommends that you avoid including anything in the 520 field that could be a plot spoiler – this seems obvious but it's not something that I'd thought about before.

The book is incredibly thorough and instructs on how to create a record that allows the item its absolute maximum discoverability for the users. I ended up feeling quite confident that I would never remember all the various punctuation rules that RDA specifies but as this book is grounded in a limited concept I would personally find it easier to refer to than I would the RDA toolkit for example, in order to quickly look something up.

Overall I enjoyed reading the book. I found the chapter on the history of film and the evolution of formats from celluloid film strips to VHS, Betamax, DVD and Blu-ray fascinating and there is a section at the end that covers film streaming services and what the future may hold. Besides cataloguers, parts of the content would be very relevant to film librarians, collection development teams and indeed anyone who deals with the acquisition or management of film collections in any format.

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